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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to enhance communication and cooperation between preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers so that they can help young children more easily adapt to the differing environments in which they develop and learn. Topics covered in this guide include: (1) information on preschool programs including enrollment statistics, family needs for such programs, and different types of programs available; (2) elements of continuity and discontinuity between preschool and kindergarten programs; (3) who should be involved in communication among early childhood programs and when the communication should take place; (4) types of activities which can be used to enhance communication; (5) types of information that should be communicated; and (6) beneficial effects of facilitating preschool-kindergarten transitions for children, parents, and teachers. A four-item bibliography of references is included. (DC)

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New Jersey Department of Education

EASING THE CHILD'S TRANSITION
BETWEEN HOME, CHILD
CARE CENTER & SCHOOL

Early Childhood Education Resource Guides

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Abstract

Early Childhood Education Resource Guides

New Jersey State Department of Education

The Early Childhood Education Resource Guides consist of three related booklets: Planning an Educational Program for Young Children; Planning for Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education; and Easing the Child's Transition Between Home, Child Care Center and School. Written for teachers and administrators of preschool, kindergarten, and primary classes, the booklets present principles and planning steps which are generic to all programs for the education and care of young children.

Purposes and content of the three guides are as follows:

Planning an Educational Program for Young Children is a systematic planning guide designed to assist early childhood teachers in two of their major responsibilities--planning the educational program and designing classroom activities.

Planning for Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education provides assistance in developing objectives and activities for parental involvement as one component in the total program of early childhood education.

Easing the Child's Transition Between Home, Child Care Center and School is designed to help teachers in preschool programs and kindergartens to enhance communication and cooperation among themselves, so that young children may more easily adapt to the differing environments in which they develop and learn.

Easing the Child's Transition Between Home, Child Care Center & School

A GUIDE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Published by:

New Jersey State Department of Education
225 West State Street
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EASING THE CHILD'S TRANSITION

BETWEEN HOME, CHILD CARE CENTER, AND SCHOOL

A Guide for Early Childhood Educators

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I. INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to help teachers in preschool programs enhance communication and cooperation with kindergarten teachers to facilitate the child's transition into formal education.

In increasing numbers, young children are participating in programs of care and education prior to their enrollment as kindergarten pupils. For many young children and their families, the kindergarten teacher is not the first "teacher" and the kindergarten class is not the first group experience. Whether by necessity or choice, more parents are seeking such programs for their children than ever before, and the trend is expected to continue.

These circumstances hold great significance for all those who educate and care for young children. Learning is a continuous process. Preschools are important influences in children's lives. Programs in prekindergarten classes, nursery schools, Head Start, day care, and other child care centers should be built on the growth taking place in the first months and years in the home. In turn, kindergarten programs should be built on the learning and development that have taken place in the child care centers. The influence of the family remains fundamental to the extent and duration of early childhood education, in whatever setting it takes place. It is increasingly important, therefore, to link subsequent steps in the children's education to their earlier experiences; yet there are no systematic procedures through which child care center personnel and elementary school teachers and administrators communicate and coordinate shared goals, curricula, teaching strategies, or contacts with parents.

To study ways whereby schools and child care centers might provide more continuity and consistency for the children and parents they serve, the Departments of Education and Human Services cooperated in planning activities through an Interdepartmental Capacity-Building Project between 1979 and 1981. Through interviews, discussions, and workshops, educators in child care centers and elementary schools in Middlesex and Monmouth Counties met, shared concerns, and developed strategies to meet young children's needs more effectively. At the same time, a parallel project was underway to assist New Jersey Follow Through programs in forming better linkages with the Head Start programs which many of their pupils had attended.

The suggestions and procedures that follow are based on the work of those preschool and kindergarten teachers and administrators. Their ideas may help others who teach and care for young children to communicate and cooperate so that children may more easily adapt to the differing environments in which they develop and learn.

II. ENROLLMENT IN PRESCHOOL CHILD CARE & EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Never before has preschool education reached as many children as it does today. Although the number of preschool children declined nationally between 1967 and 1977, enrollment in child care centers rose sharply -- from 14% to 32%

(Hendrick, 1980).[1] Since 1977, the number of preschool children in the population has increased by 36%; by 1990, children younger than six years of age are expected to number 23.3 million (Hofferth, 1979). These figures indicate that more and more children are starting kindergarten with a background of care and education in a nursery school or child care center, and the trend will accelerate.

A. Family Needs for Child Care & Early Education

Several factors account for the increased enrollments of children during the preschool years. More working women is one important component. As of September 1981, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, 42.9% of preschoolers have mothers in the work force. The number of single parent families also makes a significant contribution to the rise in enrollment in child care centers. Traditional "babysitters" -- grandparents, older siblings, other relatives, close neighbors -- are less available. Many parents must seek out community resources to meet their child care needs.

In addition, many families are placing young children in early childhood programs for reasons unrelated to parental employment or family status. For example, parents may want to provide enriching social and educational experiences for their children through the worthwhile activities and greater access to playmates that a child care center program affords. Today's smaller and more mobile families often find it difficult to provide the companionship young children need. Parents may want to expand their children's opportunities for safe and active play. Or a parent may want and need child care during periods of study, training, or pursuit of personal interests.

B. Diversity in Programs

Because families and communities have differing needs for seeking and offering child care, a variety of programs is available. There are programs primarily for warm and loving care, for enriching educational or aesthetic experiences, for special needs and handicapping conditions, for overcoming disadvantage and neglect, and for comprehensive objectives of child development.

Programs of early childhood education also have been broadened as a result of research in social science and education, which has consistently demonstrated the strong relationship between early experiences and later learning. Traditionally, programs of preschool care and education have emphasized social-emotional and psychomotor objectives, but a

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[1] "Child care center" is the term applied to privately sponsored programs for two-to-five-year-old children in groups of six or more. Such centers must be licensed under criteria established and administered through the New Jersey Department of Human Services.

growing emphasis on intellectual and language development has spurred development of programs to foster growth in these particular areas. Curriculum can range from the simple provision of safe, physical care in supervised play groups, through structured developmental programs. Moreover, children may attend full or half-day child care centers for one year or more years. This group experience, in turn, may follow months or years of home-based care with a parent, relative, or trained caregiver. The result of this variety of programs is children enter kindergarten with vastly different preparatory experiences.

Kindergarten programs are diverse in purpose, structures and schedule: there are traditional programs which emphasize orientation to school and readiness for reading and basic education; open classroom approaches in contrast to highly structured curricula designed to accelerate acquisition of skills; and full school day or the familiar half-day schedules.

III. TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

A. An Emerging Gap

The move from the preschool years to kindergarten is made more difficult by the lack of continuity. The child care center or Head Start program may have been very different from what the young child and his/her parents find in kindergarten.

1. There may be changes in physical surroundings or differences in educational goals, teachers behaviors, attitudes, and expectations.

   - Group sizes in preschool child care centers may be relatively small -- 15 to 20 children, with two or three teaching staff members.[1] In kindergarten, there may be 25 children, with only one teacher.[2]

   - Preschool scheduling may be flexible, whereas kindergartens may be required to adhere to a time schedule based in part on cooperative use of playgrounds, cafeterias, gyms, buses, etc.

   - In preschool child care centers, children are often encouraged to work cooperatively, select many of their own activities, and talk with each other. In kindergarten and primary classes, the goals may include developing independent work habits and enhanced ability to follow a teacher's directions.

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[1]For baseline licensing standards for ratios of teaching staff to children by age, see Manual of Standards for Child Care Centers, regulations under N.J.S.A. 18A:70-1 to 9 and N.J.S.A. 30:1-25 (See p. 18).

[2]N.J.A.C. 6:26-2.4 limits kindergarten enrollment in the public schools to 25 pupils. Exceptions up to a class size of 29 may be made by the county superintendent of schools, acting for the Commissioner of Education, with the provision of an approved classroom aide.

2. The role of the parent may change markedly.

   - If a particular kindergarten is formal in structure, the parent's involvement in decision-making and frequent informal classroom participation will seem less feasible in that kindergarten than it was in the more informal child care center.

   - Daily, informal communication with the classroom teacher and principal may not be possible, especially if the child is bused a long distance to school.

   - Medical, dental and social services and referral information may be less readily available than in the preschool child care center where there is a greater focus on the needs of parents.

3. The child may be expected to behave very differently in kindergarten.

   - The higher pupil-to-teacher ratio requires that the kindergarten child share the teacher's attention with more children.

   - There may be less tolerance of spontaneous movement and speech and increased expectation of participation in directed group activities.

   - The kindergarten child will probably be encouraged to demonstrate more self-control and discouraged from releasing tension through the emotional and physical actions that might have been allowed in the preschool center.

Some of these changes are appropriate in light of the increased age and maturity of the children and the expectations of society for school experience. However, abrupt and confusing changes can affect negatively the child's sense of confidence, school behavior, and performance. If parents are unsure of themselves or uncomfortable in the school setting, they are less able to help the child overcome confusion and frustration and adapt quickly to the new environment.

B. Elements of Continuity and Discontinuity

Despite the variety of settings in which children participate and learn, their needs and characteristics remain relatively consistent. Johnny and Johanna in the child care center are the same Johnny and Johanna, although admittedly older and more experienced, when they arrive at kindergarten, and their parents are the same as well. The teachers and the program, however, differ. Each program, whatever its particular emphasis, should offer integrated learning experiences which extend the children's understandings and abilities in ways appropriate to their ages and developmental levels.

Programs of early childhood education contain four major sources of continuity or discontinuity for young children: the peer group, the

teaching staff, the parents, and the curriculum. Each of these elements can be very similar between preschool programs and kindergarten programs or can be very different. Since, by definition, child care centers and kindergartens differ in purpose from each other, increasing their similarity in these elements can be difficult.

Peer Group. Young children are apt to feel most comfortable in the company of familiar friends and age mates, a situation made very difficult when they attend child care centers close to a parent's work place, for example, prior to attending kindergarten in the neighborhood school. However, continuity of even a few peers will help ease a child's transition to school and contribute to greater efficiency in learning. When it is not possible for young friends to "graduate" together from one program to another, adults may find ways to increase opportunities for out-of-school contacts between young kindergarten children.

Teaching Staff. Children need to know what is expected of them and what they can expect of the adults around them. If the expectations of the school, the child care center, and the home have some things in common, movement from one setting to another is easier for the child. Since it is rare for teaching staff to teach children in both prekindergarten and kindergarten years, teachers may seek ways to emphasize their shared beliefs about children, realistic expectations of them, and worthwhile educational experiences for them.

Parents. Parents need continuity too. They want to enhance their ability to foster their child's development and achievement. Parents' abilities to help their children and to grow in confidence and competence themselves can be encouraged by personnel, classroom activities, and administrative channels which are sufficiently accessible and similar to what they already know. In addition, children's acquaintance with their peers' parents and their growing trust in them lend stability to their young lives. Continuity of parents' involvement in programs is beneficial to all the children involved.

Curriculum and Objectives. For uninterrupted learning to occur, objectives must be designed to match each child's developmental level. Teachers need to know what the child's accomplishments, strengths, and past experiences have been, so that new ideas and experiences can be firmly rooted and rationally linked to what has gone before. Even when school goals and objectives look quite different from those of the pre-school program in the child care center, kindergarten teachers can identify the underlying skills and concepts they seek for the children. They can share with preschool teachers and parents their perceptions about the ways both levels contribute to the child's continuing growth and development.

Although learning should be continuous and interrelated, programs are disparate and unrelated. Therefore, educators and parents are faced with a difficult challenge. How may they join together to promote continuity and help children bridge the differences between the settings in which they grow and develop?

IV. COMMUNICATION -- THE KEY TO SUCCESS

When early childhood educators of kindergarten, primary classes and child care centers share concerns about children's problems in coping with change, they ask each other questions such as these:

- How are our programs different and how are they similar?
- How do our expectations of children differ?
- What can we do to prepare children and families for a smooth transition from child care center to school?
- How can we provide more continuity of experiences and expectations for young children?

Teachers and administrators of both levels view effective communication as the key in facilitating a smooth transition. If teachers and parents communicate well and often and if teachers in child care centers communicate and cooperate with teachers in the first level of elementary school, the child's transition can be eased.

A. Effective Communication

Effective communication among early childhood programs helps one program to build more continuously upon the other and permits cooperative pursuit of shared educational goals and objectives.

These efforts, as described in the pages ahead, focus upon four specific elements in effective communication about the transition process:[3]

- Who should be involved?
- When should exchange take place?
- What activities can link participants?
- What information should be exchanged?

[3] Interpersonal communication skills also contribute to effective communication. Since the primary purpose of this booklet is to help teachers design a system for inter-program communication, discussion of person-to-person communication skills will not be specifically included here. For help in this area, see Carkhuff, Berenson, and Pierce (1975).

B. Who Should be Involved?

Adults from both sending sites -- preschool child care centers or other preschool programs -- and receiving sites -- kindergartens -- should participate. The designated preschool representatives should consist of directors and coordinators, teachers, teacher aides and assistants, parents, and auxiliary personnel -- social service workers, nutritionists, psychologists, consultants, etc. Elementary School representatives should include principals and supervisors, kindergarten and primary teachers, parents, teacher aides and assistants, district and county office administrative personnel, and auxiliary personnel -- social workers, nutritionists, psychologists and special educators.

Parents are essential in the communication process in which teachers engage. Home has enormous impact, and research indicates that a partnership between home and school can support the developing child. Indeed, a joint effort by school and home is necessary to effect a smooth transition. Home visits by preschool and kindergarten teachers can strengthen the relationship and support parenting efforts.

C. When Should Exchange Take Place?

Interchange among programs should take place regularly and with sufficient frequency to maintain and build mutual confidence and respect.

- Several planned meetings per year are recommended, preferably at least three: a meeting in the fall for social purposes, a winter meeting for shared in-service training, and a cross-visitation in the spring.

- As individuals become more committed to this cooperative endeavor, spontaneous or informal contact occurs more frequently, e.g., through brief notes, telephone calls, coffee breaks, and other informal meetings.

D. What Activities Can Link Participants?

Both formal and informal contacts should be provided during the year. People learn in many ways: through observing, discussing, raising questions, expressing feelings and attitudes, and doing hands-on activities. A good transition program must include opportunities for each type of activity. Communication about general matters and specific concerns should take place through several different channels, i.e., social functions, professional meetings, written communication, parent-child activities, and parent-school interactions.

1. Beginning Communication. The first step should be an "awareness" session for educators, administrators, and parents from the community or county. It may be a workshop and/or coffee hour, during or after school hours. Some suggestions follow:

- Encourage individuals to become acquainted, share concerns, and identify target areas and strategies for improving communication at the time.

- After a general introductory session, break into small groups for discussion, form groups on a geographical basis, wherever possible, so that school personnel and staff of their sending preschools may become acquainted. Close with a large group summary and a statement of future plans.

- Form local committees to organize future activities. Include a representative group of interested persons to develop a yearly program, clarify objectives for transition activities, evaluate the program, and maintain cooperation and communication on a regular basis. When planning activities, the committees should identify the real needs and interests of the parents in the group and provide for participation. In this way, experiences are more likely to fulfill the desires and thus be more valuable to them.

- Plan for follow-up activities by all participants. An effective technique is the exchange of cards between strangers, one color for preschool personnel and another for kindergarten-primary representatives, to be filled out with names and phone numbers. After exchanging cards for the contrasting color, participants make a commitment to call each other within a week to describe programs and share concerns.

2. Become Better Acquainted. Social functions can provide a relaxing and comfortable environment in which individuals can share their view and become better acquainted. These may be combined with programs of professional development. The following ideas may help:

   - Try luncheons, potluck suppers, programs, and excursions of shared interest.

   - Combine a shared meal with in-service workshops which meet the needs of both child care center and school personnel.

   Some elementary schools are experimenting with opening up their in-service workshops to day care and Head Start personnel in the neighborhood.

3. Meeting Identified Needs Cooperatively

   Transition is smoothest when preschool and kindergarten classrooms are housed in the same building. This has been the case when public schools have sought additional classroom space for kindergartens in community facilities such as churches with the private preschool programs and when preschool child care centers have moved into empty public school classrooms.

Teachers tend to combine their classes for visits of resource persons, celebrations, children's performances, and special audio-visual presentations. Screening and assessment tools and instructional materials are often exchanged and shared, as well. When preschool and kindergarten teachers can work together that closely, visit each other from time to time, and plan integrated learning experiences, the gap between preschool and elementary school can be narrowed.

However, such proximity is not typical and does not ensure close cooperation, which requires human commitment. Some suggestions for cooperative planning and activity between unrelated programs for four years olds and programs for kindergarten pupils follow:

- Some programs are able to exchange staff as substitutes on occasion.

- Combined participation on policy advisory committees is recommended where feasible.

- Written communication is another channel for transmitting information. Encourage persons to contribute articles about transition events or other topics of interest to parents for publication in each other's newsletters. The preschool winter newsletter can include anecdotes from kindergarten teachers that illustrate the children's growth.

- In the spring of the year, preschool teachers can write letters to receiving public school administrators listing names of children who will attend that school, indicating the length of time each child attended preschool and communicating important information regarding the nature of the program, its objectives, and typical experiences offered the children.

- Summaries of work accomplished in both levels may be circulated at transition meetings.

- Kindergarten registration and screening may be planned so as to ease the transition for children. Preschool representatives closest to the children can be present at the screening. They may be able to reassure an anxious child and increase the effectiveness of the procedure. The presence of a familiar and trusted adult also eases the stress for parents. In fact, some preschool programs host the kindergarten screening procedures, thus permitting children to show what they know and can do in a well-known, non-stressful environment.

- Summer activity booklets may become a valuable resource for families during the months prior to kindergarten.

Such booklets offer ideas for family fun and enriching children's activities during the months before kindergarten begins. Teachers from both levels can work together to develop a sampling of preschool and early kindergarten activities to show how kindergarten concepts build upon earlier learning, thus offering parents an opportunity to increase their understanding of how young children learn. Activities should encourage active involvement by children and parents, facilitate children's feelings of competence and self-esteem, and elicit curiosity and enthusiasm for learning on the part of both parents and teachers. Far from being a collection of dittos or worksheets, the booklet should emphasize how typical family experiences and routines can enhance learning and prepare the child for enthusiastic entry into kindergarten, e.g., nature activities, science experiments, art activities, cooking, woodworking projects, family excursions, water and sand play, fingerplays and songs, and games for the beach or swimming pool.

- Children find their paintings and other preschool work to be a source of reassurance during the first days of kindergarten. Preschool teachers can share these products and information about favorite learning stations and activities of particular children with the receiving kindergarten teachers. Kindergarten teachers might obtain such materials from parents, too, so that children who have not had a child care center experience may also be represented. Upon entering new surroundings with these familiar displays, the children are likely to feel more secure and comfortable.

- Parents may choose to transfer children's records from the child care center to the school. This is a sensitive issue that causes concern for parents and educators. Parents should be informed of their rights to privacy and all concerned persons should have an opportunity to raise and voice their concerns.

- A spring meeting may be an appropriate time for parents, child care center personnel, kindergarten teachers, and administrators to discuss assessment procedures and their relationship to curriculum. Both preschool and kindergarten teachers can describe program objectives and assessment procedures used and what the results mean. Kindergarten teachers can explain how preschool records would be used. Such discussion protects the rights of parents and reinforces their role as partners in the child's education.

- After spring registration, kindergarten and preschool teachers can provide parents with a list of children who will be attending the same kindergarten in the fall. The children may be able to visit their future classmates and make new friends before the start of school. This gives parents a chance to meet other parents, set up necessary car pools, etc.

- Kindergarten teachers can send notes to the parents prior to September, encouraging parent participation and offering suggestions for helping the child feel at-home more quickly during the first few days of school. These may include what parents might say and do to ease anxiety, descriptions of the first few days of school, suggestions for children's comfortable apparel, bus schedules, and ideas for acquainting children with the classroom and the school and their location.

- A get-acquainted tea or other event in the kindergarten classroom for parents and teachers of both levels gives parents a chance to see the classroom, greet the child care center teacher, and meet or become better acquainted with the kindergarten teacher before the start of school. Parent committees, incorporating the outgoing kindergarten parents with the incoming parents, are ideal sponsors.

These ideas are indications of what others have found valuable. A committee organized as described (page 8) and for the purposes proposed will generate many ideas that can strengthen this linkage between programs and persons.

E. What Information Do Adults Need to Ease the Transition?

Communication can be enhanced when persons involved are familiar and comfortable with each other. If opportunities are provided for participants to ask questions and give information about themselves and their programs openly, the foundation is laid for effective communication in all aspects of the transition.

One of the simplest but most critical needs is for accurate and unbiased information about programs. Most teachers of preschool programs are understandably proud of their own programs, and they have a professional and personal interest in the young children enrolled. It is sometimes difficult to "let them go" to what seems like a more impersonal, inflexible, and content-oriented kindergarten program. On the other hand, most kindergarten teachers, equally proud and dedicated, strive to plan and carry out a learning program based on community expectations, school goals and objectives, and children's needs, and to do so with careful attention to individual children. Honest acceptance of each other's professionalism and commitment and unbiased reporting to parents will aid parents and their children immeasurably in the transition from child care center to kindergarten.

1. Basic Facts about Programs: Educators at both levels need to be aware of basic facts about programs of preschool and kindergarten education and parental perspectives, e.g.:

   - the variety of programs and persons available to meet children's needs in the community
   - what preschool programs emphasize and what kindergartens expect children to achieve
   - the common elements shared by programs and how learning can be integrated
   - characteristic instructional techniques
   - typical instructional materials
   - parental interests and patterns of involvement
   - available resources and support systems that minimize anxiety and relay accurate information to parents

2. Information about the Children. Information about the progress of the children is of paramount concern to individuals involved in the transition. Educators of both levels will want to tell each other about what a child has learned to date and how further, additional learning can be promoted, e.g.,

   - How does a particular child learn most efficiently?
   - What seems to motivate the child to complete a task or undertake a new one?
   - With which peers does a child prefer to interact? Which ones can soothe? Which ones can cheer?
   - What seems to make the children feel most comfortable? Do they seem to relate better through adults, other children, special materials (such as finger plays, stories, songs, manipulative materials, art activities, etc.)?

   The exchange of information should not inhibit the inclination and ability of teachers to engage in their own gauging of children's learning tempos and modalities, to find unique ways to motivate them, and to help them strike out in new directions. Professional teachers are able to take what information is available to them and use it judiciously to improve children's education.

3. Information for Parental Responsibilities. Parents need to know what to expect so that they can prepare their children accordingly. This preparation can be facilitated by teachers in a number of ways, through written or phoned contact or through parent-teacher meetings. Parents will want to know such information as the following:

- how they may help the child to anticipate and cope with the first few days of school in the new setting
- bus schedules or suggestions for acquainting children with walking to school safely and without fear
- appropriate dress and any materials, supplies, or money needed
- the names of other parents to contact (Parent committees can be invaluable aids for this kind of information.)
- ways in which parents may participate in the kindergarten program or the life of the school

V. BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF FACILITATING TRANSITIONS

Since preschool enrollments are expected to rise in the years ahead, the demands upon early childhood educators will be heightened. These educators may then question why they should take on additional responsibility. What are the benefits to those concerned -- children, parents, teachers?

A. For Children

If child care center teachers, kindergarten teachers, and parents ease the problems of coping with widely discrepant settings, children may demonstrate enhanced self-esteem and confidence, improved peer-group relations, greater efficiency in learning and positive regard for teachers.

B. For Parents

If the potentially damaging effects of discontinuous experiences of their children are minimized, parents may develop understanding of phases of early childhood education, increased confidence in contacts with educational personnel, a better background for cooperating with schools, enhanced self-esteem and more effective communication skills.

C. For Teachers

Teachers who cooperate with others to ease the child's transition between home, preschool center, and school can expect enhanced ability to meet individual needs of children, increased efficiency of program planning and implementation, better community support, an enlarged professional support network, and a wider pool of resources.

VI. CONCLUSION

All good teachers hope to help each child with whom they work, to challenge the child to learn, and to prepare the child for more complex tasks. To provide the best possible educational opportunity for children, teachers and parents must join forces to develop programs and learning experiences that build upon each other and effect smooth transition from the preschool to the kindergarten.

Given the diversity of programs and resources in early childhood education, this is a difficult undertaking. Yet, it is possible to build close, productive working relationships that promote and foster a child's continuous development.

The heart of these efforts is communication, a two-way process through which teachers discover ways to accomplish common goals and assist each other in efforts to understand children and enrich their lives. Linking the significant adults in children's lives through communication is a giant step on behalf of the increasing numbers of children who will attend both preschool programs and kindergartens in the years ahead.

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